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Mystery of Love

by Miriam Andrews

THERE is a song, well known in our time, which opens with the words: "Ah, sweet mystery of life, at last I've found thee." It goes on to say that the mystery is love, and love is "the answer and the end and all of being."

The song-writer spoke of natural loves. Yet such is the order of God's created world that the merest fragment of love, found at any level of creaturehood, reflects God's own love and re-echoes God's own Mysteries.

So it is not surprising that all unconsciously, perhaps, the song-writer stated a universal truth — one which lies at the heart-center of Christian doctrine.

The Trinity itself, with its three ~~Natures~~ Persons united in one Being, is based wholly on the mystery of love. God, knowing and loving Himself infinitely, begot the Word, His own Son. In the boundless love flowing eternally between Father and Son, the Third Person of the Trinity has Its Being.

In the Mystery of the Redemption, love, also, is a moving force. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" in order that his adopted sons might share, if they will, in eternal life.

But it is in the Mystery of the Incarnation — the Word made flesh — that Divine Love most nearly approaches that which man in his wayfaring state can translate into terms of his own experience. He cannot, of course, comprehend the degree of power and goodness that not only *could,* but *would* bring into perfect focus under the restricted lens of humanity "the invisible things of God," making them "clearly seen . . . understood by the things that are made." (Rom. 1, 20.) He cannot grasp the magnitude of a Love so great that a Father should send His own Son to earth to suffer and die, or that the Son Himself should, out of Divine Love, joyously assent to the incredible burden of the Cross. He cannot fathom the mystery of two natures, one Divine and one human, united in a single nature. These things are beyond human understanding.

Yet, in a most intimate sense, man *can* share in the Mystery of the Incarnation. For when "God became man that man might become God" (Aug. xiii, de Temp.) He became completely man in the human aspect of His nature.

He assumed, among other characteristics, the human intellect. "Behold that servant shall understand," said God, speaking through the

prophet Isaias (xiii, 13). So we know the Son of God shared in mental human ways the suffering of those who "loving the Lord their God with all their hearts and their neighbors as themselves," must grieve continually over the offenses against God witnessed on every side.

Christ's heart, like the hearts of all Christians, was made heavy day after day at "man's inhumanity to man," and at the sight of his beloved neighbor bowed beneath greed and guilt, beneath pride and other forms of resistance to God's will.

His sorrow, like that of other Christians, must have been increased a thousandfold by those among His neighbors for whom life was empty and dreary because they rejected God.

Like many other Christians He must have watched these neighbors sadly as they struggled beneath the weight of crosses in which they found no joy, since they were borne for the sake of no love but earthly love.

Like any other Christian, He must have wondered how they could endure the darkness, how they could stand upright beneath the pressure of what was to them, a Godless world.

These sufferings the Son of God must have shared with all of Christian humanity. And thus far along His path of anguish we can travel with Him.

But there came a place in the path too narrow for any but He. And Christ, the human Christ, went on alone, searching out a way completely uncharted, to perform a mission which only He, of all men who ever had, or ever would, walk the earth, could perform — the Divine mission of the Redemption of man.

On the physical level, too, we can comprehend much of the earthly sojourn of the Son of God. We know what it is to feel pain; we bleed when we are pierced with a sharp instrument; we find our resistance failing when we are hungry or thirsty or tired; we have, at times, lifted and carried an object so heavy that at first we thought the task was impossible; we have felt the adrenalin pour into our bodies on occasions of fear or anger.

But all these things we suffer in proportion to our physical structure. If we are weak, nature mercifully permits us to lose consciousness when pain becomes too intense. If we are strong, we must suffer longer.

Christ's human structure, we are told, was in every way perfect. It follows then, that both the mental and the physical anguish He endured far exceeded that which falls to the experience of less perfectly articulated humanity.

Was it necessary, one may ask, for God's Word to become Incarnate, to assume vulnerable flesh, to endure insults and blows, to carry a most actual wooden cross of nearly unbearable weight, to be fastened to that

cross with nails, finally, and to die there? Wasn't there another way the salvation of man could be accomplished?

The answer is, of course, that God in His omnipotence could have chosen to restore human nature by any one of countless methods. We cannot question, however, that He selected the most fitting one. Mankind needed a Mediator to redeem it from the original sin into which it fell when Adam, out of pride, defied his Creator.

But aside from condign satisfaction which could be offered only by Christ, incorporating God and man (since Adam's sin was an infinite offense, committed as it was against God Himself), it was necessary also that God send to man an example to follow. St. Augustine points out: (de Trin., xiii, 17) "Man's pride, which is the greatest stumbling block to our clinging to God, can be convinced and cured by (an example of) humility so great."

The efficiency of the method God chose for humanity's Redemption is summed up in a sermon on the Nativity by Pope Leo (Nativity, xxi). Speaking of God become man, Pope Leo says: "Weakness is assumed by strength, lowliness by majesty, mortality by eternity, in order that one and the same Mediator of God and men might die in one and rise in the other — for this is our fitting remedy. Unless He was God, He would not have brought a remedy; and unless He was man, He would not have set an example."

What is humanity's obligation in this matter of the Incarnation? The answer is simple, almost too simple for the human mind, accustomed as it is to seeing a thing in its parts, rather than in its whole composition: our obligation is to return love for love.

But we cannot love without knowing. So our obligation is to know Christ, to understand how God, working through the Second Person of the Trinity, has planned our redemption.

To know, to understand, we must first of all accept the principles taught through revelation.

We accept without question the mysteries of the physical world. No scientist has ever seen an atom of sodium and an atom of chlorine join hands to form a molecule. Yet we take salt — the product of this joining — on faith. Can we do less in our faith toward God's greatest Mysteries than we do for a grain of salt — one of His lesser mysteries?

"If we have been slow to love," says St. Augustine, "let us hasten to love in return." The sequence of man's obligations in regard to the Mystery of Love is quite clear: to know God, and through knowledge of Him, to love Him; through love, to honor and obey; through obedience, openly professed, to receive the sacraments; through the sacraments to be filled with grace; and through grace to perform God's will in all things.

Ode to Civil Defense or A Modern Ancient Mariner

by Charles Novak

PART I

It was a tired scientist,
Who halted one of three.
"With your withered frame and your trembling limbs,
Now take your hand from me.

I have to close a business deal
My client's waiting too,
I don't have time for idle talk —
Not with the likes of you."

He held him with his glittering eye —
The young tycoon stood still,
And listened like a little child,
The scientist had his will.

"My story happened years ago,
I was a young buck then.
The world was filled with cheerful things,
And there was peace 'mong men.

But men worked hard to improve on this;
They felt a growing need:
To rid the world of peaceful things,
And replace them with force and greed.

For untold ages men have fought
For land, for power, and gold,
With knife, with club, with arrow, with gun,
The story is quite old.

For as men found new technical skills,
To aid them in their daily life,
So men developed machines of war,
To aid them in their daily strife.

"But what has this to do with me?"
The young tycoon was bold to ask.
"I have no time for foolish tales
Which keep me from my daily task."

"But hear my tale indeed you must,
And gain its moral too.
It perils all the human race,
Indeed it threatens you.

I'm but a link in the mighty chain
Which causes men to cower.
While others made less lethal weapons,
I discovered *atomic power.*

PART II

I intended it to benefit man,
To better his life on earth;
To run his factories, heat his homes,
But others saw its worth

As a mighty force to gain their ends,
To kill, not help mankind.
They used my gift to my fellow man
As it never entered my mind."

"I know the story well, my friend.
Please be a little calm!
You're trying to say that evil men
Discovered the *atom bomb.*

PART III

But why tell me this dreadful tale?
I haven't a thing to fear.
Who would use an atom bomb on us?
It can never happen here."

At this remark the old man's eyes
No longer held the bright young man.
He parted from the aged chap,
In fact, he even ran!

For he was late for his business deal,
He had no time for words,
The scientist was full of dreams,
And strictly "for the birds."

He recalled the man's unusual tale
As he hurried down the street;
He remembered his own very quick reply,
To himself did he repeat:

"It can never happen here," he said,
"Against us use the atom?
Men have not regressed that far,
That they would set a pattern

Of wanton destruction over all the world,
Of cities buried in their ruin.
The old man's tale is but his dream,
A wild tale, of his own doing."

The wise young man had stopped to listen,
A siren's blast wailed overhead.
An air-raid — not a false alarm;
Not overseas, but here instead!

A brilliant flash, a spire of smoke,
A deathly silence filled the air;
The old man's vision had come true.
An *atom bomb* had struck somewhere.

Morality and the Novel

(A REVIEW)

by Robert G. Toomey

IT IS not difficult for one to divide the criticism of modern literature into two main camps: one includes the adherents of a kind of abstractionist theory; the other clings to a more pragmatic viewpoint. Both appear in constant struggle and opposition. The former, in its philosophical context, looks on all acts as ends in themselves, with no extrinsic dependence on any causal reality. There is, further, a heavy emphasis on semantics and the study of definitions, with an indefinite series of species and sub-species involved in the critical process. I. A. Richards and others, who have devised a multiple variety of theories about meaning, pretend to consider art in the state of a vacuum, with no real connection to the life around it. They have separated it from the implicit morality of life which acts as a brake on art and which gives at least the hint of meaning to any work of art. One of the thinkers of this school has given definition to this particular point of view. In *Forms of Modern Fiction* (ed. Wm. Van O'Connor, p. 259) the following statement is made:

> ". . . though it may be that the critic's ultimate concern is with the conception of life (the 'values') of which the novel is a vehicle, yet he is only so concerned in so far as that conception is made active through art."

On the other side of the coin is the more popular view which considers a novel great if it has reached the list of best-sellers. A work's greatness rises or falls with the number of sales, the variety of book clubs that have endorsed it, and the number of people who have read it. Most magazine and newspaper critics belong to this second group. They differ from each other in their own category not in the same way that truth differs from falsehood, but in their exclusively empirical, work-like approach to the novel. Their generalizations about novels are directed to an audience of people who read for the same reason that they take a vacation — enjoyment, with an occasional shock to keep from getting too bored.

In *Norms for the Novel,* Fr. Gardiner, literary editor and book critic for *America,* while tending to sympathize more with the second group of critics, rises above both the intellectual and middle-brow (the "I-read-Life-Magazine" type) groups. His book came about (he says) "as a result of controversy and discussion" of two novels, one of which was *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn,* Betty Smith's pleasant study of a poor

Irish-Catholic family. Though not a great novel, it was immediately swept up by Hollywood and translated into one of the more successful movies of a year more noted for its war propaganda than for its entertainment.

Norms for the Novel, with a few revisions and extensions, remains essentially the same as the author's earlier booklet, *Tenets for Readers and Reviewers,* which was used in conjunction with an aesthetics course in at least one Catholic college during the school year 1951. It includes the familiar "five principles of moral evaluation — literary dogmas based on theological principles. Several best-selling novels serve as examples. These principles, though almost self-evident, must nevertheless be defined for those reviewers whose job it is to guide the thinking of readers and direct their choice of books. Certainly everyone reads a book for the pleasure obtainable, but how many read for their own moral edification?

The principles follow — though not necessarily in order of importance:

1) The Norm of Objective Charity
2) Objectionable Parts and Total Effect
3) Recognition of Sin for What It Is
4) Detailed Description of Sin
5) Fiction and the Art of Living

The author is assuming that his readers are "normally well-balanced readers who are not always shocked by the appearance of a passage containing a description of an act that for lack of a better qualifier can only be called immoral." There is instruction also for some Catholics who, in the author's words, "do not really know the function either of literature or of literary criticism." This statement refers also to those hyper-critical few — those misinformed, over-scrupulous types — who find grounds for a new Index of Forbidden Books everytime they read something that even suggests the possibility of *sex* (a word which appears even now in the titles of some sociology textbooks). The critic faces the difficult task of warning his audience away from both of two dangerous extremes: the formation of false consciences (scruples) and the tendency towards laxity in judgment (indifference). Both sins, related as brother and sister, give way to a further aberration, and that is the acceptance, *a priori,* of a critic's vague conclusions and generalized impressions of a novel, about whose morality he knows as little or less than the reader.

Lax judgment — the philosophizing of sin out of existence — is possibly the most over-looked evil in the civilization some historians are fond of calling modern. It grew out of the movement in New England known as Transcendentalism. It appears consistently in the writings of Emerson; Henry James shows evidence of his approval in his notebooks,

and it continues to exert a powerful influence over the minds of the younger novelists of the present generation. Its banner is tolerance, but it swears allegiance to an indifferent god. One person is as good as another, it says, and one religion is as acceptable as the next; law and final judgment are reasonable only insofar as they conform to the vagaries of the individual imagination; and liberty — defined as the right to do as you please — is confused with license. The present battle being waged in the Supreme Court between censors and non-censors is a good example of the difference between tolerance and truth.

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, although it describes an incident in the sexual life of infant's growth, is not a manual on how to wean babies. (It also describes a young girl's brief encounter with a sexual pervert, but it is hardly commendable on moral grounds.) A better book — *The End of the Affair,* by Graham Greene—describes the explicitly adulterous relationship between a married woman and a man; the narration is in the form of a diary. The heroine, after promising to repent of her sins if God saves the life of her lover, dies an heroic death — the kind of death that might be ascribed to a saint. Even the man, a consistent unbeliever and skeptic, after several "miracles" attributed to the intercession of the dead woman, finally recognizes, if nothing else, at least the existence and, more importantly, the Providence of God. What apparently began as a sordid study in sexualism ends as a potentially religious novel. A parallel example is the work of Francois Mauriac, the important French novelist, whose books, under the various disguises of psychology, psychoanalysis, and casuistry, are really studies of the nature of spirituality. Good and evil appear together, but are not so obviously distinct as in the old morality plays, for example.

The End of the Affair contains more than one page of description that might very possibly be a temptation to even normal readers. But because motivation and remorse are involved with the physical actions, and because sexual concern does not exclude the thought of consequences, it cannot be condemned on grounds of immorality. (Actually the book is a continuation of the theme of Greene's earlier works — the influential acceptance or rejection of Divine Grace.) Those few prudish readers who seem to excel at finding fault with passages which might possibly have a double meaning and with certain phrases which refer to the physical expressions of love and affection shared by two people are only revealing themselves as abnormal and basely interested in the sordid side of sexual life. Their heritage is Puritanic. Basically, it sees in every secular activity an occasion of grave sin. As Fr. Gardiner points out, though, the emotionally mature reader need not be warned away from a novel merely because it contains references (whether oblique or direct)

to the idea of sex.

This Jansenistic tendency in much of modern moral criticism leads almost directly to the problem of literary *sensibility*. The element of the impressionable in every reader's emotional makeup cannot be eliminated as unimportant, nor can one critic solve the problem for each and every reader. Readers differ according to a lot of influences, personal and environmental, and must construct a sort of private *Index*. The reader's temperamental response will partially determine his standards of literary morality and will change with his period of growth (or decline). If one is tempted under certain conditions and circumstances, the sensible thing to do would be to put the book down for once and for all. Temperament, environment, education — all three are elements that differ according to the individual personality. What invites sin for one is not necessarily a similiar attraction for another.

Objective Charity is another principle that is much sinned against today. Critics for the most part tend to read an author's life into his novels, and for no apparent reason. The kind of critic that has little or no conception of the function of criticism is alluded to by Fr. Gardiner when he states clearly that a novelist must be judged "through his work and not his work through him." Any deviation from this principle is a sin against charity. (How many critics, then, who have failed to heed this warning, would be out of a job right now?) Only when an author "reveals himself in the book or in the totality of his writings" can one make exception. It is surprising, though, how many readers are almost entirely ignorant of the private life of their favorite author. Most novelists seem to prefer solitude to the adulation of a crowd. Unlike the movie stars (whose lives seem to waver between the after-hours nite club and the late-morning divorce-court), they are not particularly interested in seeing themselves in the glare of lights. Exceptionally, though, a few authors are forced to act the part of a celebrity: at autograph parties, meetings of women's clubs, and various other mundane events not especially noted for their influence on the destiny of literature. (Charles Jackson, in the "Outlanders," has written an amusing account of a novelist's encounter with ordinary people, who view the famous man as a sort of circus clown or some kind of freak of nature.) The great exception to the rule is of course Thomas Wolfe, who makes it plain that he is writing of himself in all of his novels. In his preface to his first published work, he goes against the doctrine of the separation of art and life when he warns the reader:

> "it seems to him [Wolfe] that all serious work in fiction is autobiographical—that, for instance, a more autobiographical work than 'Gulliver's Travels' cannot easily be imagined."

Much of the criticism of Shakespeare is founded on a method of interpretation based on the assumption that it is only through his work that the real Shakespeare can be known with certainty.

A further question might be asked: Whose side is the author on? From one character or several, can one judge where the author's sympathies lie? Or can the author remain impassive and to an extent outside of the work itself? Looked at from an historical perspective, the condition can be seen to have come about as a result of the decline of the literature with a definite teaching function. The writers of the late Renaissance began the inevitable revolt against the Church and its moral restraints and influences. The school of naturalism is traceable to the theories of Spencer and Darwin, the fathers of evolution. As a movement in 17th century philosophy (in England, especially) it became a mimicry of Descartes' famous divorce between mind and matter. The "angelism" of Poe and the materialism of today's writers are both direct descendants of this separation of matter and form in man — two essentially inseparable notes. In France, during the latter half of the 19th century, the greatest spokesman for naturalism was the novelist Emile Zola. What began in history as a conscious revolt against moral restraint and Church authority continues in its present condition to appear in the novels of those authors who went to the school of Dreiser, Hemingway, and Faulkner. Today, in spite of mention of a decline, it is very much alive. *The Adventures of Augie March,* a unanimous choice for the National Fiction Book Award of 1954, is an epic in naturalism.

Naturalism, as a species of realism, is defined by Fr. Gardiner as a "habit of mind . . . which either denies or refuses to consider the existence of suprasensible realities." But it deviates from true realism because it places too much emphasis on sense and is full of what the author calls "excess." Wallace Fowlie, in *Saints and Angels,* makes a neat summary of the whole problem:

> "The humanism of the Renaissance has maintained and developed to its logical conclusion throughout the entire modern era its fundamental lesson, which is the lesson of man facing himself and his human destiny. This lesson has taught the modern hero to give no more thought to his supernatural destiny which alone can raise a moral issue to an heroic level."

The virtue of Hope, an intangible reality, together with Faith and Charity, and also part of "value," is absent from the novel of naturalism. Existentialism (ostensibly an extension of Kierkegaard's guilt thesis, but more a literary fad), which began with a promising statement against the Kantian over-emphasis on the ideas *essence* and *mind,* has added to the general movement the note of rejection and despair. Further, the

great riddle of "appearance and reality" seems to fix most recent philosophies in the larger context of literature. Lionel Trilling (in *Forms of Modern Fiction,* ed. Wm. Van O'Connor), tries to introduce history when commenting on the position of the great Spanish novelist, Cervantes:

> "Cervantes sets for the novel the problem of appearance and reality: the shifting and conflict of social classes becomes the field of the problem which at that very moment of history is vexing the philosophers and scientists."

Ars Gratia Artis, the emblem of one of Hollywood's larger film factories, was also the standard of Oscar Wilde and the French Symbolists of the last century. The American Edgar Allen Poe gives a definition of poetry which closely resembles Plato's theory of Ideas. "Poetry," he says more specifically, "approximates music," which he calls the most "indefinite" of the arts.

Among the sane critics, most of them agree with Aristotle that *conflict* is the heart of any great work of art. Conflict involves a subject motivated by a knowledge of right and wrong. Motivation implies a free will — free insofar as it makes the final choice of an object as an end. And truth and beauty are necessary elements of the aesthetic sense. For a person to be committing sin, therefore he must be aware that what he is doing is wrong. Circumstances may alter the morality of an act, but it is the will that finally accepts or rejects. Scobie's final act in *The Heart of the Matter* is a good illustration: he decides to take his life, but he could have chosen to remain alive. For this very reason one cannot call the book naturalistic.

Hemingway's heroes do not act; they are acted upon. Their actions appear to be nothing more than a passive resistance to a rather cruel fate. The fiction of Sinclair Lewis is filled with synthetic characters who are concerned, not with good and evil, but "complacency and irritation." Faulkner, perhaps the foremost writer of the "pure" naturalistic novel, holds a personal grudge against the exploiters of nature:

> "The rape of nature, the mere exploitation of it without love, is always avenged because the attitude . . ."

More recent proof of the continuance of the naturalistic strain is the example of *From Here to Eternity,* a novel about army life and about one member of the army who for lack of any other name can only be called a "bum." (The book was originally published in 1951. Two years later, in less than four months time, over 1,500,000 copies of the paperbound edition were sold. Now in its 12th printing, its sales have passed

the 2,000,000 mark.) The characters of this large novel are convinced of the existence of evil, but not of good. ("There is no love in it!" as one person who saw the movie version remarked.) The author has one of the characters say to another: "You sound just like a novel by Hemingway." One might go a step further and say, "Your novel, Mr. Jones, sounds just like a novel by Hemingway."

Jones' novel has been called a novel of social protest. The army, the society-within-a-society, functions as the only recognizable villain. Ironically dedicated to the U.S. Army, the book is a picture of the individual *vs.* society. It might also be called the cry of the Communist *vs.* government, Luther *vs.* the Church, chaos and might *vs.* order. It disregards the consequences of human acts in a way that is undignified and disrespectful. Thorsten Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class* is introduced as a stimulant for sympathizing with the lower-class enlisted man. Included also is a quasi-leader of men (a permanent resident of the stockade, who would rather tell you how to escape than escape himself). Pvt. Prewitt sees him as his own personal savior and begins himself to theorize about revolutionaries and Emerson's Common Man.

The resemblance between the different naturalistic novels lies in the fact that they offer no tangible solution to the problems they so vividly depict. If a novel professes to be a document or case history of one man's particular problem, it stops where it began; there is no perceptible change in the character of the person because, as Fr. Gardiner points out, "once the novelist strives to get behind the social facade of behavior, he is ineluctably drawn into the ultimate 'whys' of human action." All great literature, from Dante and Chaucer to the present, is much more than a narrative of physical events. Literature must also have a purpose. Wellek and Warner, in *Theory of Literature,* explain this particular aspect of the whole of literature:

> "It must always be interesting; it must always have a structure and an aesthetic purpose, a total coherence and effect."

How *should* things have happened, Aristotle asks. Is justice triumphant, or, as in the case of Pamela, is Virtue rewarded? The end of all literature — one of the ends — is pleasure: pleasure, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the person who uses pleasure and his other natural functions for his own growth in wisdom and grace. A great book should inspire a reader, should "ennoble" his character — above all else should help him acquire the great virtue of Charity, which is Love, and which is identifiable with the opposites of happiness and suffering, pleasure and pain. It is one with literature and life, both of which have a beginning, middle, and end.

Imagination

Oh, can you hear the roar
Of the ocean on the shore?
Can you hear the foam a-gurgling?

Can you see the fall
Of a cataract tall?
Can you see the foam a-surging?

Can you hear the growl
Of a river's bowel?
Can you see the foam a-leaping?

Can you see the dikes
As the river strikes?
Can you hear the foam a-seeping?

Can you smell a rose
And feel its pose?
Can you taste the morning air?

Can you see the vales
And distant dales?
Can you sense these senses rare?

If through this poem
Your memories roam
With vivid concentration,

Then you possess
A power, no less —
It's called "imagination."

— *Michael Acquaviva*

Paradise Lost and Found

Leprechauns, 'tis said, do not exist,
But don't I know better?
Sure, aren't they the angels
Whom God would not fetter?

When Michael, the Irish Archangel,
Was chasin' the Devils from Heaven,
And castin' them into hot Hell,
(Which is somewhere beneath ould Glasnevin),
Some angelic "consenshuss objectors"
Refused to take part in the fight.
But when Mike was for chasin' them too,
God said that it wasn't right.
Though they didn't jump to protect Him,
They weren't evil enough to rebel,
And though they couldn't be stayin' in Heaven,

They weren't desarvin' o' Hell.
"Where, then," said Mike, "will we put 'em?"
("I'll give 'em the back o' me hand!")
"In a nice quiet spot," said the Lord,
"A wee bit o' heavenly land."
"I know just the place," said old Mike.
"Sure, I'm quite eager and rarin'
To chase 'em out through the gate
To the green island o' Erin.
'Tis right where Ye dropped it, O Lord,
When Ye were makin' this heavenly place,
And there they'll abide, now, forever,
And start the great Leprechaun race."

And there they are to this day,
As neutral now as then,
Not sarvin' their God as they should,
Nor havin' to do with men.

— *John P. Browne*

Sonnet

"In my beginning is my end." — T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*

The day, breathing in its parchment dust,
Scourging the monk sufficient in his field,
And crowning his head beneath the straw, must
In this necessary desert, shield
Its own face, or kingdom come will trample
Our new grass before the day is done,
Before our proper end, or time, ample,
Decrees the setting of another sun.

O mother of Him who in your womb leapt
Silent in the mystery of life, removed
From us in poverty; who have wept
Beneath the deep dismay of noon, has loved
The Word made flesh, the spoken birth,
Has mourned the silent death of life on earth?

— *Robert G. Toomey*

A History of the Abortive Freshman Rebellion Sept. 23, to Oct. 19, 1955

by John P. Browne

[AUTHOR'S NOTE: *It is to be expected that a good number of readers will doubt the credibility of the following events. Unfortunately, this disbelief on the part of the general public faces every historian who attempts to reveal hitherto secret and hidden events or conspiracies. Be that as it may, the story still must be told. I have had the great good fortune of securing copies of pertinent documents, and these documents are appended to this account. I have secured other valuable information from personal interviews with both sophomore officials and insurrectionist freshman leaders.*]

TRADITIONS, like gray hairs, are old and venerable, and must be respected. It has long been an unquestioned scholastic tradition that upperclassmen should oppress, terrify, and otherwise harass freshmen. Although there have always been a few freshmen in every school in every age who defied this tradition, there has never been, in all the history of schools and scholars, a group organized not only to defy, but also to overthrow, this ancient custom. That is, never until September 23, 1955.

On the above mentioned date, the Student Union of John Carroll University summoned the student body to a convocation. At this convocation it was announced that Hell-O Week would henceforth last for the duration of one month. The rules of conduct for freshmen were read to the gathering, and copies of these rules were distributed to all freshmen. (Document I.) Although the author has not been able to secure a copy of the minutes of this convocation, he was himself present, and can therefore attest to the above. He observed, as these announcements were made to the assembled students, that a goodly number of freshmen expressed active resentment towards them. He subsequently learned that five freshmen, whose names he has sworn not to reveal, formed a resistance movement which soon came to be known as Freshmen for Freedom, or the FFF.

The FFF movement spread rapidly through the dissident elements of the freshman class, and soon could speak authoritatively for at least

one-third of them. The first official action of the FFF was to openly declare their independence. (Document II.) On receipt of this Declaration, the Student Union convened in executive session. Father Brophy, the Moderator, stated that it would be bad publicity for the school if this should be made public, and therefore, his office, the Dean of Men, would not officially take notice of the situation. He hoped, however, that the Student Union would be able to squash the rebellion in its infancy. Hank Tech, the president of the Union, took the position that the whole thing was a joke, and that the Union was far too busy to look into such affairs, and would therefore give it a clean bill of health. There was an open discussion amongst the members of the Union, some agreeing with Fr. Brophy, and others supporting Mr. Tech. Mr. McRoberts of the Mexican Club, and a sophomore, moved that the sophomore representation should be given the task of investigating the incident, and, in the event that any concrete evidence be uncovered, the sophomore class should be given emergency powers to deal with it through the Kangaroo Court. The motion was seconded, and passed in subsequent vote; Fr. Brophy concurring, providing there would be no violence. The eloquence of McRoberts was roundly applauded.

The sophomore class immediately launched a relentless investigation, and found, to the astonishment of all, that there actually was an organization known as Freshmen for Freedom. And this discovery was, in effect, the substance of their report, for they found out nothing but the fact that the organization did exist. Invoking the emergency powers so recklessly given, the sophomore class declared that nothing short of ruthless methods would suffice in putting down the rebellion. The Kangaroo Court was immediately activated, a Sophomore Inquisition, headed by John McRoberts, was organized with the purpose of discovering the rebels, and bringing them to trial, and the Persian* Rifles were given the duty of enforcing the court's decisions.

On September 26, a notice outlawing the Freshmen for Freedom organization, and declaring military law in effect throughout the school, was posted on all bulletin boards. (Document III.) In reply, the FFF published a set of retaliatory acts designed to punish any upperclassman who dared to try to enforce the Rules for Freshmen. (Document IV.) Politically embarrassed (he was seeking the presidency of the Student Union), McRoberts accepted the challenge, and agents of the Sophomore Inquisition immediately pounced upon three freshmen suspected of being members of the clandestine organization. Only one of these victims attempted to retaliate. This poor fellow was dragged before the Kan-

*Persian, as opposed to Pershing.

garoo Court, and summarily sentenced to walk about the campus "sounding off." A detail of the Persian Rifles was requested to enforce the sentence. In retaliation, the FFF published a document accusing McRoberts of highly irregular political practices. (Document V.)

To the horror of the sophomore class, it was found that the Persian Rifles had been infiltrated by the FFF, and were not available for duty. (Document VI.) McRoberts, an influential member of the Rifles, immediately launched an active investigation of that organization, and court-martialed a number of freshmen members. The records of that court-martial were never made public. The accused freshmen were publicly stripped of their braid, and drummed from the Rifles. The espionage agents of the FFF had, however, done their work well, and the Rifles did not recover in time to take part in subsequent actions.

As September gave way to October, more and more freshmen were arbitrarily hauled before the Kangaroo Court, and sentenced to perform humiliating deeds. To enforce the decisions of the Court, McRoberts forged a military organization from the Sophomore Inquisition, and with it he rigorously patrolled the campus.

As each freshman was brought before the court, he was allowed to make a statement in his behalf. In almost every case, the freshman refused to recognize the legality of the court, demanded to be represented by counsel, and further demanded that his case be presented to an impartial jury of seniors and juniors. McRoberts replied to this by stating that first of all, the tradition of Kangaroo Courts was barren of any such frills, and secondly, that the very name "Kangaroo' betokened the fact that these democratic procedures would and should be discarded.

This statement was a grave political error on the part of McRoberts, but, as it ultimately turned out, not entirely disastrous. Incensed at this outrage, Robert Brogan, a senior, rallied a number of upperclassmen to him, and vigorously protested this type of action, stating that if McRoberts were allowed to continue, he would soon be dictator of the school. Brogan invoked the Constitution of the Student Union, and clearly showed that McRoberts' actions were unconstitutional. Unfortunately, Brogan's allies insisted that he attempt to rectify the situation by legal means. McRoberts, a shrewd parliamentarian, soon had the Brogan Committee, as it came to be called, tied up in knots, and McRoberts was not officially censured until after the rebellion was put down.

By October 13, things had reached such a pitch that no sophomore dared go anywhere on campus alone. Every sophomore was followed by beanie-bedecked freshmen, sophomore activities were picketed, and soon, even the sentences of the court were not enforced; McRoberts feeling that to do so would bring about open armed rebellion on the part of the

entire freshman class, a class which was still, to all intents and purposes, loyal. The Scabbard and Blood Society, composed entirely of upperclassmen, was detailed to accompany and protect all sophomores against any acts of open violence. Although the FFF won some members of the Scabbard and Blood to their side, they were never able to put it out of action as they had the Persian Rifles.

McRoberts, feeling that the situation was rapidly getting out of hand, determined to take desperate action. Previously on October 3, he had offered a reward of 10 penny boxes of matches to any freshman giving information leading to the arrest and conviction of a member of the FFF. He had no takers. On the 5th day of October, he secretly met with three freshmen. He offered them the positions of class president, secretary, and treasurer if they would infiltrate the ranks of the FFF, and reveal its leaders to him. These pitiful wretches accepted his offer, joined the FFF, and succeeded in worming their way into the inner ranks. Secretly, on the 18th, they gave him the names of the five top men in the FFF. On the 19th, McRoberts had these five hauled before the court. The trial was short, and all five were convicted of conspiring to overthrow scholastic tradition by force and violence. The convicted freshmen were turned over to Fr. Brophy, and were put on probation. This brought the rebellion to a close. The leaderless Freshmen for Freedom broke up, and submitted to the tyranny of the upperclassmen.

Although it is commonly believed that the resistance movement is broken, and the rebellion put down, I have it on good authority (though I cannot reveal my source) that there are still a number of secret cells actively working throughout the school, even in the Student Union itself.

It is my personal belief that the FFF has struck fire to the torch of liberty, and that torch, once lit, shall never die out. I believe that future freshmen will never again be submitted to the humiliation of Hell-O Week, or Month; for a tradition once challenged effectively, is in great peril of survival.

McRoberts, though officially censured by the Student Union, was also proclaimed a hero by that same august body (only one of its many contradictions), and was voted two medals, both of which now adorn his chest. In subsequent elections, he captured the presidency of the Union, and was barely prevented from becoming a dictator by the vigilant and resolute Brogan.

APPENDIX

DOCUMENT I:

RULES FOR FRESHMEN

1. *I will learn the Carroll fight song and the Alma Mater by the*

first day of Hello-O Week, as well as the history of this most noble institution of higher learning.

2. *I shall stop at the shrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary each time I pass and say a prayer for my success and the success of the school during the year.*

3. *I will under no circumstances allow my unworthy feet to tread on the beautiful lawns of Carroll, but will always yield the sidewalk to upperclassmen.*

4. *I will not allow my unworthy feet to contact the school seal embedded in the lower lobby of our beautiful administration building.*

5. *I will always enter or leave the administration building by the lower rear door under the chemistry wing.*

6. *I will "button up" (putting my hands and all in them on top of my head) and "sound off" (yelling at the top of my lungs, "Beat —— Next Team"), when requested to do so by an upperclassman.*

7. *I will always wear my beanie and name tag, especially at athletic events, and I will carry my class schedule with me at all times.*

8. *I will attend all rallies, mixers, kangaroo courts, and especially all last practices and athletic events, and the pushball contest.*

9. *I will carry my student handbook, class schedule, and a penny box of wooden matches at all times, and never less than five books to class.*

10. *I will memorize these rules by the first day of Hell-O Week, and will carry a copy of them on my person at all times.*

DOCUMENT II:

DECLARATION OF FRESHMAN INDEPENDENCE

Be it known to all men that we, the bruised, battered, bewildered, and down-trodden freshmen of John Carroll University, being met in solemn clandestine assembly, do hereby declare that:

Whereas: we are now academic scholars, and feel that hazing is scholastically undignified, and

Whereas: we feel that we should have some voice in our government, and have not been given that voice, and

Whereas: the wording of the "Rules for Freshmen" is so vague and misleading that it is therefore unfollowable, we shall not comply with most items therein,

We hereby declare: that we are free and independent of all follies upperclassmen may try to impose on us, and

We hereby declare: that we shall resist upperclassmen to the best of our ability,

We are: Freshmen for Freedom.

DOCUMENT III:

PROCLAMATION OF LAW

We, the Sophomore Inquisition, do hereby advise all freshmen that the secret organization, Freshmen for Freedom, is prohibited by law, and membership in said organization is punishable by severe penalties, said penalties being subject to the discretion of the Kangaroo Court, and

We, the Sophomore Inquisition, do hereby advise all freshmen that they are subject to martial law now in force throughout the campus.

Signed: *John McRoberts,*
Chief Inquisitor,
Sophomore Inquisition

DOCUMENT IV:

ACTS OF RETALIATION

Let all sophomores, and other upperclassmen, be hereby advised that

Whereas: Point 3 of the infamous publication, "Rules for Freshmen," hereinafter referred to as "the rules," is contradictory, we the Freshmen for Freedom do propose to carry out the provisions in the following manner: When approached on any pathway by an upperclassman, we the freshmen, will give way to that upperclassman, and at the same time avoid stepping on the grass by leaping upon the back of said upperclassman, and riding him to our destination. We thereby comply with the wording of the regulation.

Whereas: Point 6 demands that when requested to do so by upperclassmen, we must yell at the top of our lungs, "Beat - - - (Next Team)." we shall do precisely that, i.e. Yell at the top of our lungs the exact wording of the regulation, "Beat dash dash dash Next Team" directly into the ear of the upperclassman. We thereby comply with the wording of the regulation, and violate it in no way.

Whereas, Point 8 of the rules demands that we attend "all . . . kangaroo courts," we shall do precisely that, i.e. every freshman will appear at every session of the kangaroo court, and voice his protests. We thereby comply with the wording of the regulation, and do not violate it in any way.

Whereas: If any upperclassman requests a match from us, we shall give him one providing he pays us a carrying and handling charge of one cent per match, and

Whereas: Point 9 demands that we carry no less than five blue books to class. We thereby comply with the wording of the regulation, and do not violate it in any way.

Signed: *Executive Committee,*
Freshmen for Freedom

FRESHMAN REBELLION

DOCUMENT V:

ON MC ROBERTS

Students of Carroll, Awake! The enemy is in your midst! The enemy is none other than John McRoberts! Can you not see it? Are you not aware of the danger?

McRoberts, by means of a military alliance with the infamous Persian Rifles, is attempting to seize political control of the school, and establish a tyrannical dictatorship by means of the Student Union. Already McRoberts is exercising powers not authorized by the Constitution of the Student Union. How much more power will he usurp? Is it already too late? How much longer will you remain blind to the danger? Look about you Carroll men, before it is *too late!*

Signed: *Executive Committee,*
Freshmen for Freedom

DOCUMENT VI:

From: *Commander, Persian Rifles*
To: *John McRoberts, Chief Inquisitor, Sophomore Inquisition*
Dear Sir:

I regret to say that I cannot comply with your recent request for troops. Due to foul play, the white spats, white helmets, and shiny bayonets of the Persian Rifles have either been stolen or hidden. The troops feel that they are ineffective without their outward display, and consequently, their morale is at an extremely low ebb. I feel that it would be disastrous to mobilize the organization for active duty at this time.

Sincerely, etc.
Signed: *Commander, Persian Rifles*

12 copies

Student Government: Questions and Answers

by Frank Tesch

THE functions and operations of student government have never been burning issues at John Carroll. Heated discussions over the rights and privileges of our Carroll Union have never been the hallmark of Union meetings. In large measure this is fortunate, because student legislatures frequently can and do serve important purposes in the scheme of things within a university. On the positive side it can be justifiably pointed out that the activities of the Carroll Union have been expanding considerably, and it has been taking on more and more the functions which are normally ascribed to a legislative unit. However, it is not to grind an axe that these words are put down.

This article is designed not so much to relate a long list of dreary facts about how good your student government thinks it is, but rather to consider some important notions about governing bodies in general — why they exist, what should their purpose be — and to point out, if I may be so presumptuous, why it is important for students to be alert to the comings and goings of their representatives.

I

During this past summer, I attended a number of sessions of the student government committee of the National Student Association, assembled for its national congress at the University of Minnesota. As a result of my stay in Minneapolis, there is at present on my desk a large loose-leaf notebook literally jammed with mimeographed working papers, resolutions, counter-resolutions, proposals, questions, answers, bibliographies, and what-have-you, all revolving around the notion that a "student movement" is abroad in our campuses, that we have only to bide our time and soon education processes will be at least half in the hands of student leaders. Everywhere the notion is prevalent that students must have a hand in curriculum planning and in financial discussions, that student-faculty relations committees are an absolute "must" if higher education is to succeed to the level, apparently divinely-inspired, where all will be milk and honey because educators bend to the collective will of the student body — naturally, expressed through the voice of an omnipotent student government.

These are extremely interesting theories, it is true. They represent, it must be said, much long and diligent thought on the part of many dedi-

cated student leaders across the nation. These leaders, for such they are on their campuses, do not represent the thinking of all students — for example, they do not represent me. I would hasten to point out at this juncture that my stay in Minneapolis was not entirely fruitless, for some very pertinent points about student government did come up. With some elaboration of my own, I should like to submit them for your consideration.

First of all, why do we have student government at all? Rather than repeat all the time-worn bromides about the traditional impotence of these legislatures, I will admit that many of these groups do very little to justify their existence. Nevertheless the question remains: what must the governing body do to warrant its continuation? There are, I feel, three basic responsibilities of any student government:

a. Represent the interests of the student body with outside agencies, and be the agency through which, in matters large and important, students are informed and called upon for action and assistance.

b. Provide services and facilities which cannot otherwise be effectively provided by others.

c. Be the agency which, as much as any group can, reflects student opinion; this may often entail molding that opinion, but it must never be dictated.

The remainder of this article deals with the three principles established above.

II

How can student interests best be represented?

Student governments, by mature action and adult behavior, can do much to foster the atmosphere of mutual respect which is absolutely necessary in meeting with college administrators — indeed, without this respect any such efforts are almost certainly doomed to failure. It is almost a truism that you cannot deal with people you do not trust. People are trusted because past performance indicates that trust is warranted, that words and actions will coincide and not lip service alone will be paid to an agreement.

It is to the administration that grievances must eventually be addressed; from it advice will be sought, and requests made, and information requested. It might be pertinent at this point to note that no student body worth its salt ever existed that did nothing but whine, complain, and feel put upon. Students *do* have problems — and such is the nature of man that when affairs are progressing apace, man is not disposed to finding exceptions to the status quo. Unfortunately, it is for this very reason that many governing bodies find their time consumed largely with listening to real or fancied complaints of almost infinite variety.

But back to representing student interests, presuming that a cordial *rapport* exists. I believe that a plan whereby student leaders can periodically sit down and speak freely with the administration is the most satisfactory arrangement. In an atmosphere based on respect, trust, and honesty, virtually every student problem can be satisfactorily resolved.

Students want, and I think they have a right, to know what the university's goals, aims and plans are, both for the immediate and the more distant future; legitimate problems should be honestly solved, if possible, reasonable questions should be answered. It is in this broad field that student governments can do yeoman service in representing their constituency. Only by being alert to student problems and needs, by bringing them to the attention of the administration in a proper way, and by bending every effort to carry out reasonable and proper requests from administrative and other agencies, can a student government begin to feel it is properly discharging its most important duty.

III

What services and facilities can student governments provide?

We are here on much more solid ground because we are in the realm of specific, concrete activity. It is this very opportunity to create "something from nothing" as it were, that justifies student government in the eyes of many college officials.

Carroll is a good example of student government-sponsored activity: the senior prom, stunt night, freshman orientation week, and the welcome dance. School-wide appeals for charity, such as the community chest, are almost exclusively a function of student governments, as are most activities in connection with the observance of various "weeks." Where book exchanges exist, they are almost without exception operated by or for student governing bodies. Needless to say, the same situation exists with regard to honor systems, and various other systems of student judicial control.

The opportunities to participate in legislative activity, to speak for or against measures, engage in political activity, and to become acquainted with parliamentary procedure in actual practice—all these are important. They also raise the responsibility (more often overlooked than observed) of providing a worthwhile and workable program of leadership training. Student governments, varying only in degree, direct and coordinate the activities of their constituent organizations. In providing the best possible program of extra-curricular activities, student governments must necessarily assume an implied responsibility for providing the best possible leadership. In the furtherance of this function, a student governing body must do what it can to train men in the technics of leadership.

Perceptiveness to the needs of the student body should be one of the

most finely developed senses of the legislature, and this is perhaps as close to a summation of this section as can be achieved.

IV

How does the student government reflect student opinions?

If there were any section of this article in which I felt I had a personal axe to grind, it would be here. Nowhere else do I feel so strongly about students and their relations with their governing bodies.

Nominally, colleges are formed to teach students to think, and a concomitant of thinking is the forming of opinions. Students, to judge from the hustle and bustle in the corridors, are doing a great deal of opinion-forming; almost any topic mentioned will be greeted by a half-dozen different viewpoints on the matter. Regardless of the diverse opinions that show up in these discussions, I am firmly convinced that within each university there is such a thing as the "student mind" on any given topic. They will be either for or against some issue; they will either support a project or they will not, and in the final analysis they will in all things fall into one of two camps. Where it is necessary or important for a student government to do so, that opinion can be divined, BUT ONLY if the student body is interested. I find no reason to believe that students are not interested in having their opinions voiced on matters of national and even international importance. Student governments are rightfully the agency to indicate what the tenor of this thinking is. If these opinions never reach the ears of the public, it is because student government has never taken the time, or spent the small amount of effort required to find out how students do think about any given issue.

It can be said with some justification, perhaps, that student opinion is not of such importance as to alter the course of events one jot or tittle. This may be true, but it is not the point at issue. It was said earlier that to form an opinion requires that thought be given to the matter. We have in that last sentence reached the nub of this whole article: student governments must endeavor to make their constituents *think,* to bring them to a realization that in a very few years the answers to problems they face can not be got from a book — that how well they survive in life is proportionate to how well they think.

Whimsy's Child

Sometimes in passing clouds I see her face
Which haunts my life and half-remembered dreams.
A figure, always changing, in the mist
Of London's nights and lonely days at sea.
I met her once in Paris in the spring,
And though she only smiled I heard the words
That lovers never speak but only feel.
Again she vanished, nebulous as air,
More beautiful than humans dare to be.
Where was she from, what star-sown land her home?
My life becomes a question and a search.
Must I forever love a mystery?

— *Peter Paulson*

Faith in the Future

Why, friend, that grieving look upon your face?
You look on life as if it had no joy;
Your eyes are Priam's viewing belov'd Troy,
Its death and suffering: You see no trace
Of life, of love, of laughter. Gone is grace,
The only power with which to enjoy
The chastity of life seen by a boy.
Yours is the habit of filling the space
Of futurity with cynical scorn.
And painting a scene of oncoming gloom,
You exhort all men to wail and to mourn.
Let guiding faith free your soul to presume
A morrow of hope and love: only torn
From such hearts as these wishing for doom.

— *John Hanson*

Purgation

Depression, like the labor of Hercules weighted with perdition;
Consciousness too aware of its obnoxious presence.
Sleep, that dreaded steed in black whose charger jabs the heart.
A pagan world that smiles, and a blessed wound that begs.
The toe-line of the too-taut ropes is crossed by either end, yet no one wins the fight.
I wonder at the ever-rising sun if it should deign to shine on me tomorrow.
It cannot if justice has its day.

— *Richard Kmetz*

Contributors

ROBERT G. TOOMEY, author of the prize-winning essay, "Dylan Thomas: Poetry and Romanticism," which appeared in the last issue of the Quarterly, returns this issue with his review on "Morality and the Novel." His "Sonnet," which also appears in this issue, was written, significantly on the feast of the Assumption. Mr. Toomey received his master's degree in English from John Carroll University last June, and now holds a teaching-fellowship at the University of Wisconsin.

JOHN P. BROWNE is not only the most prolific contributor ever to appear in the Quarterly, but also holds the distinction of being the only person ever to capture two awards in the same issue. His "Story-Teller" placed first in the fiction division of the contest, and his "The Quest" won first prize in the poetry division. He turns to satire this time with an account of an alleged freshman rebellion, and once again has submitted a poem, "Paradise Lost and Found." He is a junior social science major from East Cleveland.

RICHARD KMETZ, a senior social science major from Cleveland, makes his second Quarterly appearance in this issue with "Purgation." He may be remembered for "Dejection," which appeared in the Spring issue.

MICHAEL ACQUAVIVA, a native of Butler, Pennsylvania, is a junior social science major, and author of "Imagination." This is his first Quarterly appearance.

PETER PAULSON, another junior, is a student in the School of Busi-

ness, Economics, and Government and makes his home in Waukegan, Illinois. "Whimsy's Child" is his first contribution to the Quarterly.

JOHN HANSON is a recent addition to the Quarterly staff and a native Clevelander. A sophomore English major, he is making his initial Quarterly appearance with "Faith in the Future."

MIRIAM ANDREWS submitted her "Mystery of Love" while a student in the Evening Division last semester. Her works have appeared in several nation-wide publications, including, most recently, the Saturday Review.

CHARLES NOVAK, an associate editor of the Quarterly, makes his first appearance in this issue with "Ode to Civil Defense," designed to teach a timely lesson. A junior from Cleveland, he is a student in the School of Business, Economics, and Government.

FRANK TESCH, a frequent contributor to the Carroll Quarterly, is literary editor of the magazine. His most recent contribution was a travelogue, "Rio de Janeiro — The Queen City," which appeared in the Spring issue. This time he takes time out from his position as President of the John Carroll Student Union to discuss student government and its effects on college life in America, based on his experiences last summer at the meeting of the student government committee of the National Student Association.